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PEKING 027

DOS Review Completed.

August 3, 1973

TO: HENRY KISSINGER

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

FROM: DAVID BRUCE

SUBJECT: Possible Reasons for Chinese Delay in Setting
Date for Your Visit

1. In my opinion the most likely reason for the Chinese delay in setting the date for your visit is that they have not yet completed their preparations nor determined the exact timing for the Party Congress which, according to informed sources, they had expected to hold in early August. It would surely be undesirable from their standpoint to have your visit during the Party Congress; therefore, until they sort out the political issues such a conclave would involve, and assure its success, they would not wish to commit themselves to a firm date for you to come to Peking. They have abruptly postponed indefinitely visits by foreign delegations and individuals scheduled for the first half of August.

2. Tending to confirm the above, there is considerable evidence that high-level party meetings have been going on for some time and are continuing. You will recall that Chiang Ching told me on June 16 she had slipped away from an all-night party session two evenings before in order to watch our swimmers perform. Just last night, a USLO officer going past the Great Hall of the People noted lights burning on the top floor and elsewhere plus fifteen "red flag" limousines lined up outside. Much the same thing occurred on the night of July 31 according to another member of our staff. These events were not connected with foreign visits. In addition, we have reported signs of a tightening-up on ideological issues as might be expected prior to a convening of a Party Congress.

3. It is also possible that the Chinese want to see how the Cambodian situation develops prior to fixing the date for your visit. Obviously the present political and military factors would be greatly altered if the Khmer insurgents should take Phnom Penh.

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4. Regardless of the Chinese motivations in not having set a date for your visit, I believe they still want it to proceed at a mutually suitable and convenient time. Despite a few snide -- but indirect -- remarks lately about "American imperialist aggression," they have invested much political capital in improving their relations with the United States, and will want to show by an event such as your visit that this process is proceeding satisfactorily.

5. Warm Regards.

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